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FREDERIC HARRISON'S EXPOSITION OF POSITIVISM

The two volumes in which Frederic Harrison has collated, with some new material, the substance of his life thought upon positivism¹ are marked by his usual brilliancy and vigor. They will constitute a worthy memorial of Mr. Harrison's intellectual activity in behalf of his faith. In some respects the most significant single essay is the "Apologia pro Fide Mea," for it gives a résumé of a spiritual and intellectual struggle that induces a deep sympathy for the earnestness of the man. Yet that early struggle against the tenets of a static view of Christianity which he had been drilled to conceive as the only true religion furnishes the key to all that follows. "*Intra ecclesiam nulla veritas*," became the inevitable conclusion of his mind when questionings arose. Of theological reconstructions he is impatient. Liberty of thought within the church, he believes, is purchased at the cost of honesty. Yet Mr. Harrison is an intensely religious man so far as his attitude toward agnosticism, materialism, or ethical culture is concerned. With all of these he feels a certain sympathy yet rejects all because they do not satisfy man's religious nature. But in maintaining a religion of humanity he is unwilling to be regarded as in any sense a high priest. Nor will he consent that he belongs to any one man's way of thinking. It is true that he esteems Comte highly but he is not a Comtist, he insists, for he holds to the letter of no man's thought. In *The Creed of a Layman*, then, he illustrates his belief that established Christianity cannot meet the intellectual and social demands of the age and still remain true to itself. As a positive conclusion to this negative critique he sets forth the scheme of positivism considered especially upon the side of cult. The worth of that cult will be variously estimated. In the *Philosophy of Common Sense* he considers the more philosophic aspects of the situation. The impossibility of metaphysic and the failure of every philosophy of human life save positivism is proclaimed. Other interests may be served by them but not the religious interest. Yet in the end we find that Mr. Harrison has been toying with words. If words are to be emasculated of their meaning, why use such words with their unfortunate associations? But here we find that the author is guilty, in some sense, of that which he condemns in Spencer and his own remark in that case applies forcibly. "Better bury religion at once than let its ghost walk uneasy in our dreams." It is inevitable in the thinking of any man

¹ *The Creed of a Layman: Apologia pro fide mea.* By Frederic Harrison. New York: Macmillan, 1907. viii + 395 pages. \$1.75 net.

The Philosophy of Common Sense. By Frederic Harrison. New York: Macmillan, 1907. xxxvi + 418 pages. \$1.75 net.

that statements made decades apart do not always cohere. Possibly it is this that leaves a sense of dissatisfaction with Mr. Harrison's final results. What is this humanity of which he speaks and for which he supplicates reverence? He calls it a sum total of human life but in what sense is it a sum total? At times we are tempted to believe that here we are in the very presence of god—Mr. Harrison would gladly spell it so—but we are puzzled to find that it is neither God nor a substitute for God. So we must be adroit if we would not be lost among these paradoxes of which the author is fond. What place shall be given social evils in this scheme? Does humanity imply some selective principle? Indeed positivism provokes a host of unanswered queries. But, whatever may be true of other religions, positivism should be able to answer every reasonable question. So the relation of this system to ethic, the character of the immortality it promises, the practical worth of the system not to the dreamer but to the common man, all suggest debatable ground. Yet the movement, upon the whole, has been of worth in the emphasis it lays upon scientific method in religious thinking, in the subordination of the ontological interests to the practical interests of human life and in the stress that it lays upon the social relations of man even in religion. Mr. Harrison has done good service in these matters and therefore his volumes are of interest despite the fact that they add little to what he had already printed.

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AN IMPORTANT STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MYSTICISM

Professor Delacroix' admirable work aims to study a few of the great Christian mystics from both the historical and the psychological points of view.¹ The author fortunately combines the learning of the historian with the insight and training of the psychologist—a combination too often lacking in recent writers on mysticism, but one that is essential to a just presentation of the subject. The detailed and exact historical knowledge possessed by our author gives a broad empirical basis for his psychological conclusions; and his ability and insight as a psychologist make the historical parts of his work luminous and intelligible.

Four typical mystics are chosen for investigation, namely, St. Theresa, Mme. Guyon, St. John of the Cross, and Suso. These were selected both because of the amount of trustworthy historical material concerning them,

¹ *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme: les grands mystiques chrétiens.* By Henri Delacroix. Paris: Alcan, 1908. 470 pages. Fr. 10.